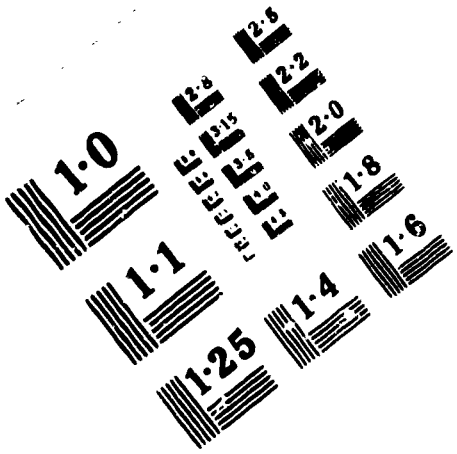
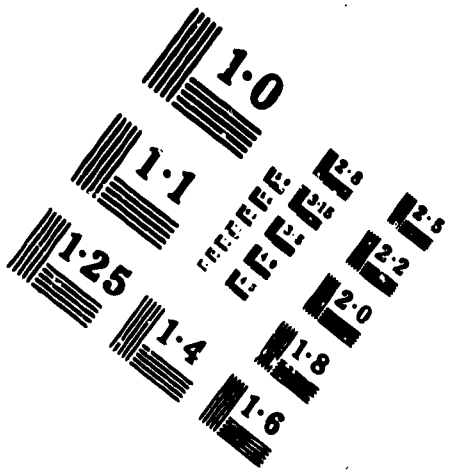


SHE

AD60



T 1

B 580

2·5
2·2
2·0
1·8
1·6

1·0
1·1
1·25
1·4
1·6
1·8
2·0
2·2
2·5

603580

COPY 2 of 3 COPIES

AN EVALUATION OF A POPULAR LEADER

PAUL D. NELSON

REPORT NUMBER: 63-9

U. S. NAVY MEDICAL
NEUROPSYCHIATRIC RESEARCH UNIT
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92152

BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY NAVY DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20390

An Evaluation of the Popular Leader

Paul D. Nelson
Lieutenant, MSC, U. S. Navy

United States Navy Medical Neuropsychiatric Research Unit

San Diego, California 92152

Report Number 63-9, June 1964, supported by the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Department of the Navy, under Research Task MR005.12-2004, Subtask 1

Opinions or assertions contained herein are the private ones of the author and are not to be construed as official or as necessarily reflecting the views of the Department of the Navy or of the Naval Service at large.

BLANK PAGE

Introduction

There is ample support for the premise that leadership and personal popularity are not synonymous in task-oriented groups (Gibb, 1950). On the other hand, the two concepts need not be divorced from one another. Most of the literature on this matter suggests either a negligible or moderately positive relationship between leadership and popularity. Such independence or lack of imperfect correlation simply indicates that within any given group it is possible to have both popular and unpopular leaders. Little attention has been given to the differences between these two qualities of leaders.

Leader behavior in general can probably be accounted for in most groups by the four dimensions derived in factor analysis by Halpin and Winer (1962). These dimensions are initiating structure, production emphasis, consideration, and social awareness. Since, as Slater (1955) implied, the best leader is one capable of fulfilling both the task and social-emotional needs of the group, a general hypothesis might be that the popular and unpopular leader are primarily different on the basis of their behavior in the social-emotional needs area. The popular leader would presumably be more considerate and conscious of his relationships and their effects upon other group members.

In an earlier study of men who worked and lived together in small Antarctic research stations (Nelson, 1964), popular and unpopular leaders were comparably more aggressive, self-confident, and task-motivated than non-leaders from the same groups. Popular leaders, however, showed significantly more emotional control, flexibility, and interest in group membership than did the unpopular leaders. The results, then, were consistent with the notion that differentiation of popular from unpopular leadership lies primarily in behavior of a social-emotional orientation. The purpose of the present study was to follow-up the previous findings concerning the similarities and differences between popular and unpopular leaders in small groups. Attention is not given to the non-leader group in this study. Three hypotheses were established.

Hypothesis I. Popular and unpopular leaders are not different from one another on characteristics denoting individual prominence.

Hypothesis II. Popular and unpopular leaders are not different from one another on characteristics denoting task-motivation.

Hypothesis III. Popular leaders have a more positive social-emotional orientation than unpopular leaders as evidenced through greater self-control, flexibility, and concern for group relations and harmony.

Method

Subjects. The Ss for the present study were selected, as discussed in the following section, from a total of sixty-seven men each of whom had worked and lived for twelve continuous months at one of three small research stations in the Antarctic. The station groups ranged in size from sixteen to thirty-five men with approximately half of the men being Navy enlisted personnel and the other half being civilian research personnel. The former group of men were of a high school educational level and median age of twenty-four; the latter group were of a college educational level and a median age of twenty-three.

Procedures. At the end of the Antarctic year, two supervisors at each station independently evaluated all men from their station on the characteristics of leadership, likability by group members, adaptability, emotional control, acceptance of authority, self-confidence, aggressiveness, achievement motivation, industriousness, and motivation to be a part of the group. In addition, the station members evaluated one another through peer nominations on personal compatibility, work efforts, and interest in maintaining group harmony.

a. Experimental groups. The popular and unpopular leader groups were derived from the supervisors' averaged ratings on the leadership and likability scales. The leadership scale referred to the relative frequency with which an individual tended to lead or follow; the likability scale referred to the individual's popularity among group members (as perceived by the supervisors). Within each of the three station groups from which evaluations were obtained, group members were dichotomized as close to the median as possible on both the averaged leadership and likability scales. After pooling the popular and unpopular leaders and non-leaders from the three station groups, a moderate positive correlation (r_t = .35, N = 67) was obtained between leadership and popularity. The final samples of leaders con-

sisted of twenty-one (n = 21) popular leaders and fourteen (n = 14) unpopular leaders.

To evaluate the validity of the supervisors' ratings, the total sample of leaders was compared with the remaining non-leaders on frequencies with which group members indicated that they had gone to such persons for advice during the year. These data had been obtained from an occupational description questionnaire completed by all men. Applying a square root transformation to the advice nominee data and using the Student t test for mean differences, the persons judged as leaders by the supervisors were consulted more frequently ($p < .01$) than were the non-leaders. In terms of popularity, the men judged by supervisors to be popular leaders had significantly ($p < .01$) higher sociometric scores than the unpopular leaders on peer nominations of personal compatibility.

b. Behavior measures. The behavior trait ratings given each man by the two station supervisors were first averaged and then converted within station to standardized T-scores (Mean = 50, SD = 10). The measure of individual prominence was obtained by averaging the standard scores for aggressiveness and self-confidence. The measure of task-motivation was derived by averaging the standard scores for achievement motivation and industriousness. The measure of social-emotional orientation was obtained by averaging the standard scores for emotional control, adaptability, acceptance of authority, and motivation to be a part of the group. In addition to the measures derived from supervisor ratings, measures of task-motivation and social-emotional orientation were also obtained from similarly standardized scores based upon peer nominations of work effort and interest in maintaining group harmony, respectively.

Results

The data in Table 1 summarize the comparisons of popular and unpopular leaders on three major dimensions of behavior. The Student t test for mean differences was employed in each analysis and the 5% level of confidence was used throughout.

Table 1

A Comparison of Popular and Unpopular Leaders on Behavior Characteristics

	Popular Leaders		Unpopular Leaders		
Behavior Characteristics	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	p
Supervisor ratings of individual prominence	54.76	7.64	53.57	8.30	n.s.
Supervisor ratings of task-motivation	55.43	10.36	50.39	8.33	n.s.
Supervisor ratings of social-emotional orientation	54.31	10.13	46.64	7.43	<.02
Peer nominations on task-motivation	54.43	9.31	52.93	9.48	n.s.
Peer nominations on social-emotional orientation	57.52	7.67	46.71	7.06	<.01
N	21		14		

Hypothesis I. The hypothesis of no difference between popular and unpopular leaders on characteristics denoting individual prominence was supported. While both groups of leaders were above the population mean of 50, there was no significant difference between popular and unpopular leaders. A two-tailed test of significance was employed.

Hypothesis II. The hypothesis of no difference between popular and unpopular leaders on characteristics denoting task-motivation was supported. On neither the supervisor nor peer derived measure of task-motivation was there a significant difference between popular and unpopular leaders, although the popular leaders were judged by supervisors to be slightly ($p < .20$) more task-motivated than the unpopular leaders. A two-tailed test was again employed.

Hypothesis III. The hypothesis concerning differences between popular and unpopular leaders in social-emotional orientations was supported. On the basis of supervisor ratings, popular leaders were more emotionally controlled, adaptable, accepting of authority, and motivated to be a part of the group ($p < .02$). On the basis of peer nominations, popular leaders were perceived as being more interested than unpopular leaders in maintaining group harmony ($p < .01$). A one-

tailed test of significance was employed in testing the third hypothesis.

Discussion

Leadership is a social process. It would seem therefore that, in addition to individual assertiveness and concern for getting the job done in a task-oriented group, an effective leader should be sensitive to the problems of group members and to the effects of his own behavior upon them. The results of the present study support the contention that a leader's popularity is to a great extent a function of his social-emotional orientations within the group.

In recent years, increasing emphasis has been placed upon the problem of clarifying leadership criteria. Bass (1960) has analytically differentiated attempted from successful from effective leadership. In another writing, Fiedler (1961) stressed the importance of differentiating effective from ineffective leadership for prediction studies. The present thesis, in keeping with the contributions of Bass and Fiedler, is that more attention might also be given to differentiating popular from unpopular leaders in small task-oriented groups. Bass's effective leadership concept perhaps best synthesizes the group achievement elements of Fiedler's effective leadership and the social-emotional orientations of the presently cited popular leadership.

Further study needs to be made of the differences between popular and unpopular leaders in terms of their effect upon group achievement. As for the individual leader's own productivity, the present results suggest no less task effectiveness from the popular leader -- if anything, more. Some concern frequently exists within formal organizations about the social distance between leaders and other group members. It would seem, however, that popularity in the sociotelic sense of compatibility does not violate the requirement that a leader be impartially related to his men. The close confinement of Antarctic station living does of course magnify the importance of leading through a continuous awareness and concern for the feelings and problems of one's followers. Effective leadership, however defined, must include social-emotional qualities as well as task interests and abilities in such a setting. Although the present data represented the informal leadership of small station groups, the results are quite consistent with those derived in an earlier study (Nelson, 1962) concerning the formally designated leaders (supervisors) of similar groups.

In conclusion, the clarification of leadership criteria has definite implications for prediction of leadership behavior. The construction of leadership tests based upon the concepts of dominance, self-confidence, aggressiveness, task ability, and achievement motivation cannot be expected to differentiate necessarily the popular from the unpopular leader -- or, in Bass's system, effective from attempted or successful leadership. The emphasis, as given by Fleishman (1957), to traits reflecting consideration as well as to those reflecting a potential for initiating structure and task accomplishment is a step in the proper direction.

References

Bass, B. M. Leadership, Psychology, and Organizational Behavior. New York: Harper & Bros., 1960.

Fiedler, F. A. Leadership and leadership effectiveness traits: A reconceptualization of the leadership trait problem. In Petrullo, L., & Bass, B. M. (Eds.), Leadership and Interpersonal Behavior, New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, Inc., 1961, 179-186.

Fleishman, E. A. The leadership opinion questionnaire. In Stogdill, R. M., & Coons, A. E. (Eds.), Leader Behavior: Its Description and Measurement. Columbus: Ohio State University, 1957, 120-133.

Gibb, C. A. The sociometry of leadership in temporary groups. Sociometry, 1950, 13, 226-243; Hollander, E. P. The friendship factor in peer nominations. Personnel Psychol., 1956, 9(4), 435-447; Stogdill, R. M. Personal factors associated with leadership: A survey of the literature. J. Psychol., 1948, 25, 35-71.

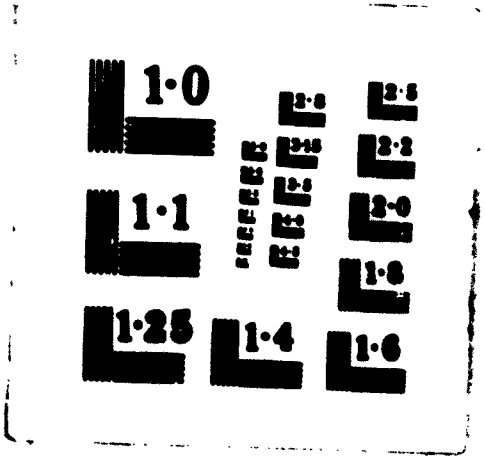
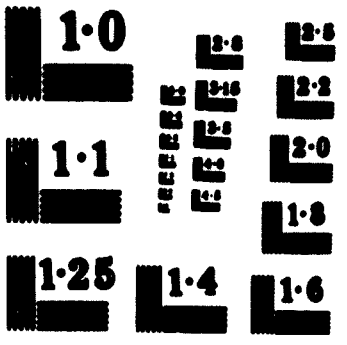
Halpin, A. W., & Winer, B. J. The leadership behavior of the airplane commander. Columbus: Ohio State University Research Foundation, 1952.

Nelson, P. D. Leadership in small isolated groups. Navy Medical Neuropsychiatric Research Unit, San Diego, California, Report No. 62-13, 1962.

Nelson, P. D. Similarities and differences among leaders and followers. J. soc. Psychol., 1964, 63, 161-167.

Slater, P. E. Role differentiation in small groups. In Hare, A. P., Borgatta, G. D., & Bales, R. F. (Eds.), Small Groups: Studies in Social Interaction. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955, 498-515.

SHEET

1 OF 1

END